

function was " to defend God's law by power of the world." ¹⁵ Craftsmen—the burden of endless sermons—worked deceitfully; but it was perhaps not wholly without value that they should pay even lip-service to the ideal of so conducting their trade, that the common people should not be defrauded by the evil ingenuity of those exercising the craft* If lord and peasant, merchant and artisan, burgess and villager, pressed each other hard, was it meaningless to meet their struggles with an assertion of universal solidarity, to which economic convenience and economic power must alike give way? " The health of the whole commonwealth will be" assured and vigorous, -if the higher members consider the lower and the lower answer in like manner the higher, so that each is in its turn a member of every other." ¹⁸ If the mediaeval moralist was often too naive in expecting sound practice as the result of lofty principles alone, he was at least free from that not unfashionable form of credulity which expects it from their absence or from their opposite. To say that the men to whom such teaching was addressed went out to rob and cheat is to say no more than that they were men. Nor is it self-evident that they would have been more likely to be honest, if they had been informed, like some of their descendants, .that

competition was
designed by Providence to provide
an automatic
substitute for honesty. Society was
interpreted, in
short, not as the expression of economic
self-interest,
but as held together by a system of
mutual, though
varying, obligations. Social well-being
exists, it was
thought, in so far as each class performs
its functions
and i enjoys the rights proportioned
thereto. " The
Church is divided in these three parts,
preachers, and
defenders, and . . . labourers. , , . As
she is our
mother, so she is a body, and health of this
body stands
ia this, that one part 'ofTier answer to
another, after
the same measure that Jesus Christ
has ordained